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The group of American pieces, principally by Philadelphia silversmiths, contains some remarkably fine examples of late eighteenth century work, including an openwork brazier with wooden handle bearing the mark of Philip Syng (1780); a small porringer by Richard Humphreys (1775); a pair of tankards with hinged lids decorated with engraved arms, by John Myers (1796); two strainers, one by Kirk & Son, of Baltimore (1817), the other by Benjamin Halstead, of Philadelphia (1783); a covered saucepan by Joseph Richardson (about 1796); a small mug by Fletcher and Gardiner (1814), and a very interesting wine syphon, bearing the mark of Samuel Williamson (1796). The collection has been installed in a separate case in the main aisle of the East Gallery.

THE SHACKLETON COLLECTION OF ANTARCTIC SPECIMENS

The collection of Antarctic specimens formed by the British expedition of 1907-1909, in charge of Sir Ernest H. Shackleton, which was presented by Sir Ernest to Mr. John H. McFadden and by the latter lent to the Museum, was installed in the Rotunda and opened to the public on June 5th. It will remain on exhibition during the summer. The following account has been contributed by Sir Ernest Shackleton himself.

"The value of a Polar expedition apart from the knowledge of the work it has done, lies in the value of the scientific collection brought back by such an expedition. Until lately there has been a wide opinion that the stark Polar regions produce nothing but a large supply of ice and snow, but this is by no means the case. The whole story of the world in its earliest stages can be read as well in Polar regions as in the more temperate zones.

"From the rocks of the Antarctic, we can tell what has happened in the changes of nature through the aeons that have gone by since the South Pole was a tropical country.

"From the birds at present living there, we can trace the stages of evolution. To the student of nature, there is as much information to be gathered on signs in general as in any other part of the world.

"The collection that is now finding a final home in Philadelphia presents the results of the British Antarctic expedition of 1907-1909. There is no collection of a similar nature in the United States, and there is no Antarctic collection displayed in any other city of the world.

"The method of collecting and preserving the various specimens is always done under hard conditions, and the results embodied in this collection comprise some three or four hundred specimens of marine fauna.

"It would come as a surprise no doubt to the general public that life in the South Pole seas is as prolific as life in the Tropical seas. The reason is not far to seek. South Polar seas enjoy an equable temperature in the summer. The temperature of the sea is just above freezing in the winter and as a blanket of ice covers the ocean, the temperature below the ice remains the same. The result is that the seas swarm with life.

"The visitors to this exposition will see Star Fish, Shrimps, Corals and Jelly Fish, Worms, Sea Spiders and delicate Sponges, all of them, however, having peculiarities due to their Polar habitat.

"There are 500 individual marine specimens in the collection. The botanical side is poorly represented, but there is one of every type of botanical specimen found in the Antarctic. Plant life is extremely abundant in the North Pole regions. Within 500 miles of the North Pole are over a hundred flowering plants in the summer; within 1,700 miles of the South Pole there are no flowering plants, and within 730 miles all plant life ceases, but a few mosses and lichens make a heroic struggle for existence in the intense cold.

"The geological side is naturally very well represented. Visitors can see specimens of rocks and lava discharged from the great active volcano, Mount Erebus. This lava is called Kenyte, and gets its name from Mount Kenia. This volcano is situated in the tropics in Africa. Mount Erebus discharges at times bombs, and amongst the collection is a bomb that has been thrown out and finally fell 18 miles away from the summit of the mountain.

"There are a great many varieties of granite, for this great continent is largely made up of mountains and masses of most beautiful granite. There are feldspar crystals from the summit of Mount Erebus; sand-stones and schists from the Western mountains; basalt from another volcano, Mount Discovery, and quartzite specimens.

"It is interesting to know that within 290 miles of the South Pole are great seams of coal. The animal kingdom is represented by a fine specimen of White Seal, seven feet long, and this is the only specimen in the United States today.

"There is an Emperor Penguin, a large bird, and there is a specimen of the young King Penguin in its brown fur, which is its dress before it attains the dignity of the white front. There are four Skua-Gulls, two in characteristic pose, fighting over the body of a young Adelie Penguin (these Skua-Gulls are voracious enemies of the little Adelie Penguin) and a Gentoo Penguin, the only specimen that has been obtained on that side of the Antarctic Continent on which the expedition was operating.

"There are skulls and teeth of various seals which give an idea of the form of the jaws of the seals. There are over 100 eggs of the Penguin, Skua-Gull and Albatross. The human side of the expedition will be represented by various units of equipment used on that expedition. There is one of the sledges used on the Western journey, which is interesting as a matter of comparison with the sledges used in the North Pole region. The tent and tent-poles of the Southern supporting party, the sleeping beds and the clothing worn by the members of the expedition, represent the general equipment necessary to compete with the rigors of the South Pole life.

"There are series of photographs showing the features of the expedition, and it is hoped that the public will take advantage of the presence of this collection about to be installed in Philadelphia, where knowledge can be gained of that remote continent which has an approximate area of five million and a half square miles."